

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An orthopaedic device for the correction of wrongly positioned toes, having comprising:

a first fastening provision (8a, 6) in ~~the~~ a region of ~~the~~ a big toe,

a second fastening provision (8b, 5) in ~~the~~ a region of ~~the~~ a central foot, and

a flexible splint (9), which is held by the fastening provisions in the regions of the big toe and the central foot (8a, 8b, 5, 11) and which extends along the an inner side of the foot wherein the flexible splint (9) is formed as a hinged flexible splint, articulated in ~~the~~ a direction of flexion and extension (20) of ~~the~~ a toe or toes requiring correction.

2. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with Claim 1 wherein the orthopaedic device (1) includes a stocking (2) or similar enclosing element for a foot that carries the fastening ~~mechanisms~~ provisions in the regions of the big toe and the central foot (8a, 8b, 5, 6) and the flexible splint (9).

3. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with ~~Claims~~ Claim 1 ~~and/or 2~~, wherein the flexible splint (9) has hinged splint shanks (10, ~~11~~) whose three-dimensional form may or may not be ~~plane~~ planar.

4. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the hinged splint shanks (10, ~~11~~) have a lenticular cross-section.

5. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the flexible splint (9) has a hinge mechanism (13) having a pivot axis (12) that corresponds approximately to the joint axis of the main big toe joint in the direction of flexion and extension.
6. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 2, wherein the stocking (2) is open in the region of the toes.
7. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 2, wherein the device (1) incorporates a holder for the big toe, ~~e.g. a big toe pouch~~ (4) that is joined as one piece with the stocking (2) or that is attached to ~~this~~ the stocking (2).
8. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 7, wherein the holder for the big toe pouch (4) fully encloses the big toe and which is open or closed at ~~the~~ a free toe end.
9. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 2, wherein the device (1) incorporates an annular binding (5) in the region of the central foot, ~~favourably~~ entirely surrounding the central foot and connected to the stocking (2).
10. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 9, wherein ~~the~~ a first annular binding (5) surrounds the outside of the stocking (2) in the region of the central foot.
11. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 10, wherein a second annular binding (6) fully encloses the holder for the big toe pouch (4) in the region of the free end of the big toe, and fully surrounds the big toe.

12. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the first and second annular bindings (5, 6) are formed of a flexible, supple material resistant to tension in the circumferential direction.

13. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 11, wherein in the region of one inner side of the foot (7) both the first annular binding (5) and the second annular binding (6) in some areas are not joined to the stocking (2) or to the holder for the big toe pouch (4), so that between the annular bindings (5, 6) and the holder for the big toe pouch (4) or the stocking (2), fastening/holding provisions (8a, 8b) are formed.

14. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 13, wherein the fastening provisions (8a, 8b) consist of push-in pockets.

15. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the flexible splint (9) incorporates a first hinged splint shank (10) and a second hinged splint shank (11) which are able to pivot around an axis (12) having an articulated connection through a hinge mechanism (13).

16. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the first hinged splint shank (10) extends from the hinge mechanism (13) to ~~the~~ a first fastening provision (8a) and the second hinged splint shank (11) extends to ~~the~~ a second fastening provision (8b).

17. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein a foot-spreading pad (14) is used in ~~the~~ an area of the sole of the foot behind the main joints of the toes for retrocapital support of the central foot.

18. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 13, wherein the fastening provisions ~~(8a, 8b)~~ are formed as pouches sewn onto ~~this~~ the stocking ~~(2)~~ or fixed in some other way.

19. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 2, wherein the stocking ~~(2)~~ is a compression stocking.

20. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the hinge mechanism ~~(13)~~ consists essentially of the first hinged splint shank ~~(10)~~, the second hinged splint shank ~~(11)~~ and a hinged splint shank connecting mechanism ~~(14a)~~, ~~in particular a tubular rivet~~.

21. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ each have a free end ~~(15)~~ and an end at the hinge ~~(16)~~.

22. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 21, wherein the ends ~~(16)~~ near the hinge have a three-dimensional form similar to that of a ball joint, and are formed so as to correspond to each other in such a way that each of the hinge ends ~~(16)~~ of the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ can be inserted into one another and interlock.

23. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ and the hinge mechanism ~~(13)~~ have a three-dimensional form adapted to the shape of the patient's foot.

24. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 21, wherein the hinge ends ~~(16)~~ of the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ have a form corresponding to one another with rotational symmetry about ~~the~~ a pivot axis (12) that corresponds approximately to the joint axis of the main big toe in the direction of flexion and extension.

25. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ are manufactured from metal or plastic, in particular from thin, carbon-fibre reinforced plate.

26. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein a force F1 can be exerted on the big toe in the direction of the inner side of the foot by the flexible splint ~~(9)~~ for lateral correction of the big toe.

27. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 26, wherein there is a provision for exerting the force F1 on one or more neighbouring toes.

28. (Original) A device according to Claim 27, wherein the provision consists of a tension element which joins a toe holder for more than one of the toes of a foot.

29. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 3, wherein the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ have a three-dimensional form substantially that of a plate, longitudinally and laterally convex, having a first longitudinal boundary ~~(52, 82)~~ and a second longitudinal boundary ~~(53, 83)~~ as well as a narrow boundary ~~(54, 84)~~.

30. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 29, wherein in the region of the longitudinal boundaries, and parallel to them, slots ~~(55, 85)~~ are provided, with the effect that a central stay ~~(56, 86)~~, edge stays ~~(57, 87)~~ and intermediate stays ~~(88)~~ are formed.

31. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 29, wherein the convexities of the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ are longitudinally and transversely adapted to the anatomical features of a foot.

32. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the annular bindings ~~(5, 6)~~ are joined to the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~.

33. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 9, wherein the annular bindings ~~(5, 6)~~ incorporate loop straps ~~(60, 50)~~ and free ends ~~(51, 61)~~.

34. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the hinge mechanism ~~(13)~~ is formed as an annular hinge with a hinge ring ~~(70)~~ and a hinge disk ~~(90)~~.

35. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 34, wherein the hinge ring ~~(70)~~ is joined as one piece with the first hinged splint shank ~~(10)~~ and/or the hinge disk ~~(90)~~ is joined as one piece with the second hinged splint shank ~~(11)~~.

36. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the hinged splint shanks ~~(10, 11)~~ have a material thickness that tapers towards each of the edge regions.

37. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the surface regions of the hinged splint (9) that lie along the patient's foot are smooth.

38. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 34, wherein an annular ridge (91) is moulded onto the hinge disk (90), and this operates in combination with the hinge ring (70) with the result that radial relationship of the hinge disk (90) and of the hinge ring (70) is maintained.

39. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 34, wherein for axial positioning of the hinge ring (70) relative to the hinge disk (90) engaging elements (92) that operate together with a step, in particular an annular step (73), are provided.

40. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the hinge mechanism (13) is covered by a closing cap (100).

41. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 40, wherein the closing cap (100) is connected to the hinged splint (9) by engaging devices (96, 101).

42. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the longitudinal extension of the hinged splint shanks (10, 11) enclose an angle α , β with the pivot axis (12), and where the angles α and β are chosen in such a way that the hinged splint (9) can be placed against a patient's foot in such a way that the pivot axis (12) of the hinge mechanism (13) is approximately in line with the anatomical joint axis of the main big toe joint.

43. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 42, wherein the angle α is between 75° and 115°.

44. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 42, wherein the angle β is between about 70° and 110°.

45. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 40, wherein the closing cap (100) is joined to the first hinged splint shank (10).

46. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 40, wherein the closing cap (100) is joined to the second hinged splint shank (11).

47. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 40, wherein the closing cap (100) is formed as an axial bearing.

48. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 1, wherein the hinged splint (9) is manufactured from plastic, in particular from a plastic resistant to impact and not irritating to the skin, e.g. of the polycarbonate class.

49. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the annular bindings (5, 6) around the central foot and around the big toe of the patient are positioned or threaded through the hinged splint shanks (10, 11) without creating steps.

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50. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 49, wherein the annular bindings (5) are fully threaded into the second hinged splint shank (11) prior to application to the patient's foot.

51. (Currently Amended) A device ~~according to one or more of the foregoing claims~~ in accordance with Claim 15, wherein the device (1) is not fixed rigidly to the foot, so that when worn the device (1) can adapt the position of the hinge axis (12) of the hinge mechanism (13) individually to the anatomical features of the patient's foot.